

Governor Riley Awards \$70.6 Million to Boost Hurricane Recovery Efforts

MONTGOMERY – Several southwest Alabama counties and cities still working to recover from the devastation caused last summer by Hurricane Katrina are getting a \$70,668,600 boost from Governor Bob Riley.

Governor Riley awarded Community Development Block Grants to 12 county and city governments on Thursday. The grants will help pay for debris removal, water and sewer system repairs and improvements, road repairs and demolition of structures damaged by the storm.

“We have made significant progress in our recovery from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, but areas of Alabama hit hardest by the storm still need our help,” Governor Riley said. “These funds will support ongoing recovery efforts in some of our most heavily damaged communities.”

Funding for the disaster recovery awards was provided to the state by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Governor Riley said that more funding is needed and state officials are seeking additional support from HUD and other federal agencies.

Projects were selected to receive grants based on a number of factors, including the number of people benefited, a community’s capacity to complete the project, cost-effectiveness, and the likelihood that construction could withstand future storms.

A team headed by State Banking Superintendent John Harrison helped identify the most serious infrastructure needs. Representatives from HUD, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) and the Alabama Housing Finance Authority serve on the team, which continues to explore additional funding sources.

ADECA Director Bill Johnson said his agency will administer the grants, and work with HUD and the federal Office of Inspector General to carefully monitor each project.

“ADECA will work diligently to ensure that these funds are spent wisely and for the purposes for which they are intended,” Johnson said.

The following local governments were notified by Governor Riley that they had been awarded grants:

Baldwin County: \$4,200,000 for water system improvements

Bayou La Batre: \$36,993,864 for a variety of needs, including sewer repairs, debris removal, housing rehabilitation, and repairs to the city's wastewater treatment pump station

Chickasaw: \$1,844,000 for sewer work

Grove Hill: \$381,000 for sewer repairs

Mobile: \$7,610,268 for sewer repairs and renovation to a senior citizens center

Mobile County: \$12,112,488 for housing rehabilitation, drainage improvements, debris clean-up and renovations of the Coden Community Center

Mount Vernon: \$680,000 for water system repairs

Prichard: \$1,000,000 for housing demolitions and drainage improvements

Robertsdale: \$632,100 for sewer improvements

Saraland: \$1,899,000 for sewer repairs

Silverhill: \$300,000 to construct a replacement water well

Washington County: \$3,015,880 to repair damaged homes, make water system improvements and street reconstruction